

(1)
The certain and unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the SOCIETIES for

Reformation of Manners,

A T
S A L T E R S - H A L L ;
O N

Monday the 3d of July, 1732.

Published at their Request.

By WILLIAM WISHART, D. D.

L O N D O N :

Printed for EMAN. MATTHEWS at the *Bible* in *Pater-noster-Row* ; and A. MILLAR, at *Buchanan's Head* over-against *St. Clement's Church*, in the *Strand*. MDCCXXXII.

(Price Six-pence.)

THE
MOMENT
OF
THE
SALUTE
HALL



By William W. ...
DO NOT ...
...
...

ISAIAH V. 20.

Wo unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil; that put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.

IT is too obvious to every one, how much Vice and Wickedness, of all Sorts, abound among us. This general Corruption of Manners is, no doubt, in a great Measure to be imputed to wretched Mistakes and Prejudices. Those Lusts by which Sinners are drawn away and enticed, must be exceedingly strengthen'd by a depraved Way of Thinking; by confounding Virtue with Vice, or covering over Vices with the Appearance of commendable Qualities: The Influence of Principle, being thus added to the Force of Inclination.

However, therefore, unable we may be to remedy other Sources of Vice; we may, at least, do something towards the Amendment of Sinners; if we can effectually convince them, "That there is a fix'd and unchangeable Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil: That Virtue has a natural Tendency to the Happiness and Welfare, Vice to the Hurt and Ruin of human Society, and of particular Persons."

If by such Conclusions, justly drawn from evident Principles, we cannot effectually reconcile the Hearts of Sinners to the Commands of God, and to the Yoke of the Redeemer; we may yet show, that the Prejudices they entertain, against the Divine Government as heavy and tyrannical, against the Laws

of God as arbitrary Impositions, against the Yoke of the Redeemer as a grievous Burden, are altogether groundless: Seeing those Things which God requires of us, and which the Love of Jesus recommends, are in their own Nature good; even tho' they were not enforced by such additional and engaging Obligations.

Hence, also, it will plainly follow, that they who *stand up against evil Doers*, and join together in using their best Endeavours for promoting a Reformation of Manners, are most usefully and laudably imployed: Their Endeavours, so far as they are influenced by sincere and well-conducted Aims at this valuable Purpose, are exceeding beneficial to human Society; and may be so even to Sinners themselves.

For which Reasons, being call'd to preach before the *Societies for Reformation of Manners*; I could not think of any more proper Subject for me to insist upon, than the Establishment of that Principle, which both contains the best Justification of their Design, and is the Foundation of the most proper Arguments to persuade Sinners themselves to comply with it: Namely, "That there is a natural and unalterable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil; even setting aside the Consideration of all Laws, either human or divine."

An Attempt of this Nature is the more requisite; because there have arisen in these latter Days *Scoffers*, *walking after their own Lusts*; Revivers of the Schemes and Cavils of the ancient Scepticks, and worst Sort of *Epicureans*; a Set of Men who, not satisfy'd with attacking the Principles of revealed Religion and Christianity, have set themselves to oppose the common Principles of natural Religion itself, acknowledged even by Heathens; nay, have endeavoured in a bold, and at the same Time a shrewd and artful Manner to overturn the Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil, to confound Virtue with Vice.

To



To such as these may the Character and Denunciation in my Text be justly applied. *Wo to them, &c.*

Where, by the Comparison that is hinted betwixt those who, in Life and Manners, *call evil good, and good evil*: and those who *put Darknes for Light, &c.* it is plainly intimated,

“ That the Difference betwixt Good and Evil in
 “ Life and Manners, is in itself as fix’d and certain ;
 “ as the Difference betwixt Light and Darkness, a
 “ bitter and sweet Taste: the *one* no more depends
 “ upon the mere Will and Pleasure of any than
 “ the *other*.

This Principle I am now to endeavour, by divine Aid, to illustrate. And that I may set the Evidence of it before you in the clearest Manner I can ; let us endeavour to fix the Meaning they can be supposed to have, who deny or call in Question the natural Difference betwixt Good and Evil in the Manners of Men. It cannot, surely, be to assert, “ that there
 “ is no Difference at all, in the Nature of Things, be-
 “ twixt one Kind of Temper and Behaviour and ano-
 “ ther: ” For *some* Difference betwixt these evidently arises from the obvious and undeniable Difference betwixt the Objects of Sense themselves. ’Tis certainly obvious, that if Pleasure and Pain are naturally and unalterably different, the Actions which cause the one, and those that cause the other, together with the Dispositions and Affections from which such Actions naturally flow, must have as fix’d and unchangeable a Difference betwixt them : If Life and Death, if Health and Sickness, are in their own Nature different Things ; sure, wounding and healing, killing and preserving Life, must be as different Actions ; Love and Hatred as different Affections.

To deny such Things as these, can scarce be supposed to be the Meaning even of those who call in Question the Difference betwixt moral Good and Evil : but their Intention, I suppose, must be to maintain ;
 “ that

“ that there is no *such* natural Difference betwixt
 “ these evidently different Kinds of Affections and
 “ Actions, as that the *one* can be call'd *good*, and the
 “ *other evil* ; in any other Sense, than as the *one* is
 “ Obedience to the *Laws* of some superior, the *other* a
 “ Transgression of them.”

But, let us see again, what can be the Meaning of this. Is it, “ that it is in itself indifferent, with
 “ Respect to others, what Way we are affected, or
 “ behave towards them? Or is it that it is indiffe-
 “ rent to one's self, how he is affected, or behaves
 “ towards his Neighbours and the Publick?

But, certainly, it cannot, with any Face of Probability, be maintain'd ; that one Kind of Temper and Behaviour is not in its own Nature *good*, and another *ill*, towards our Neighbours and Society. Can it be said to be *indifferent* to our Neighbours, whether we do them good or ill ; love them, or hate them? *Indifferent* to Society, whether we be well or ill-affected to its Interests ; whether we behave towards it, as a good or an ill Affection directs. This, sure, is too plain a Case to admit of any Dispute.

The main Strength, therefore, of those who deny the natural Differences betwixt moral Good and Evil, if they can be supposed to have any, must be reckoned to lie here.

“ Allowing that different Actions and Affections
 “ of ours have a different Tendency to the Good or
 “ Hurt of others, or of Society ; yet, what is that to
 “ us? How are we obliged to consult the Good of o-
 “ thers, and of the Publick ; or to refrain from do-
 “ ing them Hurt, if we can compass our own private
 “ Advantage that Way?

In Life and Practice it is very obvious, that the strongest Opposition to such a constant Exercise of kind Affections, as is most beneficial to others and Society, arises from an apprehended Self-interest interfering with them ; from an Apprehension that in
 acting

acting otherwise, we consult our own good, and enjoy our private advantage, however others may suffer by it.

It is, therefore, of the greatest Importance in this Argument, to show,

That it is not indifferent to ourselves how we are affected, or how we behave towards others and the Publick ; but the same Temper and Conduct which is *best for them*, is likewise *best for ourselves*, and most conducive to our true Happiness and Enjoyment. For which Purpose let us consider,

I. To what Temper and Conduct some *Natural Affections* of our own Hearts would lead us

II. What Temper and Conduct our own Minds, on a deliberate View, approve of : And in fine.

III. What Temper and Conduct, in the whole, is most conducive to our truest and greatest Enjoyment.

I. Let us consider what Temper and Conduct, some Natural Affections of our own Hearts would lead us to.

Let us reflect on the Pain we naturally feel at the very first, in beholding any Fellow-creature in great Distress ; the Joy we naturally conceive in beholding others happy ; the Inclination we find in ourselves oft-times to afford Help to others, when Occasion offers ; the Sense of Gratitude we naturally feel on our first receiving a considerable Obligation : Let us reflect on what we may have felt or observed of the Natural Affection of Parents towards their Offspring, especially in their most tender and helpless, which at the same Time is their most troublesome, Condition. Are not all these evident Symptoms of some *Goodwill* to others, *natural* to our Frame ?

Some there may be, indeed, who, by habitually abandoning themselves to the Government of some violent Passions, or narrow Selfishness, have suppressed

in a great Measure, all such social Feeling in themselves; and 'tis no Wonder if such as these be *ashamed* to own any Movements of the Heart to be *natural*, which they are *willing*, and even at Pains, to divest themselves of; and averse to allow of any greater Portion of Kindness and Goodness among Men, than they care to cherish in themselves. But what should induce others, who are under no such Byass, to bely their own Hearts; and explain away their most natural Affections, by resolving them into a Train of Reflections, they are not conscious to themselves of when they feel them? Unless it be an unaccountable Fondness for an Hypothesis, which is liked for its fancied Easiness, being imagin'd a pretty Knack of resolving all the Movements of the human Heart into one single Principle: for such is the Tale of some modern Philosophers, : " When we see
 " others happy, or in Pain, we immediately imagine
 " the Case our own; and transporting ourselves, by
 " a Sort of imperceptible Magick, into their Circumstances, 'tis for ourselves merely we feel the
 " Joy or Pain, which we flatter ourselves arises from
 " a Concern for others : Parents consider their young
 " ones as Parts of themselves (no Doubt, the brute Creatures do so too) and so their Affection for them,
 " and Concern about them, is a mere Exercise of self-Love." Curious Philosophy! might these ingenious Gentlemen be but allowed the uncommon Privilege of coining Natural-History; but if not,

I may appeal to every one, whether the Sense of Joy he has in beholding others happy, or his sympathizing Pain in viewing their Distresses, are not frequently observed to arise as immediately in his Heart, upon discerning the Symptoms of their Happiness or Distress, as any other Affection arises immediately, upon its proper Object being presented to us? Whether the Sense of Joy or Grief, by Way of Sympathy, is not oft-Times evidently perceived to prevent

prevent any Reflection on his own Case ; and even to dwell for some Time upon the Mind, before it is heighten'd by such a Reflection, as that the Case of the Person we see in Joy or Pain might be our own ? And, how should the Imagination, that the Case of the afflicted Person *may be* our own, when we know it is not, give us any Concern for another ; especially such a Concern as we don't seek to get rid of, but by removing the Calamity of another that rais'd it ? What should hinder us, after the first Uneasiness supposed to arise from the Imagination of the Case being our own was over, instead of feeling any sympathizing Pain in another's Calamity, to use the View of it rather to give an Accession to our Joy, that the Case is otherwise with us ? We may, indeed, find ourselves obliged sometimes to suppose ourselves in the Case of the afflicted, in order to give us a more lively Sense of what he feels, and how heavy the Distress lies upon him : But, certainly, it will not follow from this ; that a Sympathy, which requires no more to raise it than a full Sense of another's Distress, is a Concern rather for *ourselves* than for *him*. Again : does not the Inclination to afford Help to others, exert itself sometimes as immediately, upon Occasions for it presenting themselves ; as any other of our most natural Appetites and Inclinations ? Is it not a most natural Movement of the Heart, in all disinterested Cases ? Nay, is it not often felt to overcome an apprehended Self-interest ; and make us forget a Concern for ourselves ; particularly on Occasions of sudden Danger to others ? In fine, is not the Natural Affection of Parents towards their Children oft-times felt and seen to prevent Reason and out-run Deliberation ? Is it not frequently exercised in the strongest and most tender Manner, without the least Thought of *their Children being Parts of themselves* ?

'Tis strange to observe what Pains some are at to resolve every Affection of the human Heart into, either a rash and hasty, or a cool and deliberate Selfishness: Nor can I think it would be any Thing more absurd and unaccountable, if one should take it in his Head to resolve our Self-love into social Affection. Sure I am, that oft-times the Relish of these Enjoyments, which are reckon'd most to belong to private Satisfaction, and to be sought out of mere Self-love, arises more from something of a social Sense, and some Reference to others, either real or imagin'd Sharers in them, than from any Thing else: And the grossest Trespasses against the general Welfare of human Society, and those Crimes that are most hurtful to particular Persons, will be found commonly owing more to a narrow and misguided social Affection, an Attachment to the Interest of some particular Society with which one is connected, either by his Circumstances, or by Choice, than to mere Self-Interest. And who is there that would not gain any Advantage to himself, rather *without* than *with* the Hurt of any other, if he thought it might as certainly and easily be compass'd either Way; and was equally free from any Apprehension of Danger to himself, in *either* Case.

Now let us consider what is the evident natural Tendency of those kind Affections, of which such plain Symptoms are to be discerned in our own Hearts: Whither would they lead us, if they were not checked by other Passions arising from, or cherished by, Apprehensions of Interest? And, seeing the Good and Welfare of others is the *immediate and direct Object* of these Affections; their natural Bent, unless by some foreign Influence restrained, must be after the highest Pitch, and greatest Extent of *that Good*: *Love worketh no Ill to one's Neighbour*; but must prompt us to do all the Good we can; and lead us to a hearty Good-Will to all Mankind, nay to the

the whole System of rational Beings; and a good Affection to an universal Administration, by which we conceive the general Happiness is secured. 'Tis indeed of the Nature of this *kind Affection*, as appears by several natural Symptoms of it, that it be more particularly exercised towards those to whom we have special Opportunities of doing Good, those with whom we are join'd by peculiar Ties: And this is very agreeable to the universal Extent of it; for it is by being kind more particularly to *them*, that every one most directly contributes, in his Place, to the general Welfare; provided always that this special Kindness be exercised agreeable to an universal Goodwill, and no peculiar Ties make us forget the common Ties of Humanity.

From what has been said on this Argument, we may conclude, that we gratify a *natural Inclination* of our Hearts, in *doing Good to others*; as well as in *doing well for ourselves*: That we run cross to a natural Bent of our Hearts, in neglecting to do Good, or in doing Hurt to others; as well as in neglecting what belongs to our own Welfare, or doing Harm to ourselves. Which of these two Affections, Self-love or Benevolence, 'tis best for us to gratify; need not be a Question, unless they are inconsistent and come in Competition: Nor is there, in Reality, any Place for it; if these two Affections, conducted by just Views of what belongs to our own and other Men's Welfare, are perfectly harmonious, and are best gratified together. And whether this is not really the Case, may afterwards appear. But, let us now consider,

II. What Temper and Conduct our own Minds, on a deliberate View, approve.

In like Manner, as no sooner the Eye opens and turns upon certain Figures, but they please as beautiful; so, the Eye of the Mind no sooner opens upon,

'Tis strange to observe what Pains some are at to resolve every Affection of the human Heart into, either a rash and hasty, or a cool and deliberate Selfishness: Nor can I think it would be any Thing more absurd and unaccountable, if one should take it in his Head to resolve our Self-love into social Affection. Sure I am, that oft-times the Relish of these Enjoyments, which are reckon'd most to belong to private Satisfaction, and to be sought out of mere Self-love, arises more from something of a social Sense, and some Reference to others, either real or imagin'd Sharers in them, than from any Thing else: And the grossest Trespasses against the general Welfare of human Society, and those Crimes that are most hurtful to particular Persons, will be found commonly owing more to a narrow and misguided social Affection, an Attachment to the Interest of some particular Society with which one is connected, either by his Circumstances, or by Choice, than to mere Self-Interest. And who is there that would not gain any Advantage to himself, rather *without* than *with* the Hurt of any other, if he thought it might as certainly and easily be compass'd either Way; and was equally free from any Apprehension of Danger to himself, in either Case.

Now let us consider what is the evident natural Tendency of those kind Affections, of which such plain Symptoms are to be discerned in our own Hearts: Whither would they lead us, if they were not checked by other Passions arising from, or cherished by, Apprehensions of Interest? And, seeing the Good and Welfare of others is the *immediate and direct Object* of these Affections; their natural Bent, unless by some foreign Influence restrained, must be after the highest Pitch, and greatest Extent of *that Good*: *Love worketh no Ill to one's Neighbour*; but must prompt us to do all the Good we can; and lead us to a hearty Good-Will to all Mankind, nay to the

the whole System of rational Beings; and a good Affection to an universal Administration, by which we conceive the general Happiness is secured. 'Tis indeed of the Nature of this *kind Affection*, as appears by several natural Symptoms of it, that it be more particularly exercised towards those to whom we have special Opportunities of doing Good, those with whom we are join'd by peculiar Ties: And this is very agreeable to the universal Extent of it; for it is by being kind more particularly to *them*, that every one most directly contributes, in his Place, to the general Welfare; provided always that this special Kindness be exercised agreeable to an universal Goodwill, and no peculiar Ties make us forget the common Ties of Humanity.

From what has been said on this Argument, we may conclude, that we gratify a *natural Inclination* of our Hearts, in *doing Good to others*; as well as in *doing well for ourselves*: That we run cross to a natural Bent of our Hearts, in neglecting to do Good, or in doing Hurt to others; as well as in neglecting what belongs to our own Welfare, or doing Harm to ourselves. Which of these two Affections, Self-love or Benevolence, 'tis best for us to gratify; need not be a Question, unless they are inconsistent and come in Competition: Nor is there, in Reality, any Place for it; if these two Affections, conducted by just Views of what belongs to our own and other Men's Welfare, are perfectly harmonious, and are best gratified together. And whether this is not really the Case, may afterwards appear. But, let us now consider,

II. What Temper and Conduct our own Minds, on a deliberate View, approve.

In like Manner, as no sooner the Eye opens and turns upon certain Figures, but they please as beautiful; so, the Eye of the Mind no sooner opens upon,

upon, or is presented with the View of certain Actions, and the symptoms of certain Affections ; but we approve of one Kind, as fair and amiable ; condemn another, as foul and deform'd. The good and kind, the generous and grateful, the pious and devout Part (especially where the Devotion partakes mostly of Love and Resignation to the Perfection of Goodness and Wisdom) is always approv'd ; and the contrary condemn'd.

The good Character may indeed have the Appearance of its contrary so artfully cast on it, that the Mind may be misled to condemn it ; and the bad one may be so disguised with the Appearance of Goodness, that the Mind may be drawn to approve it : And 'tis only this Way that the Judgment of the Mind can be misled ; tho' by Interest, or the Force of Passion, or Habit, one may be led to act contrary to the Judgment of his Mind. But Goodness, or the Shew of it, always gains the Approbation of the Mind, appears amiable, and is view'd with Pleasure : And nothing else can render a Character amiable.

No Circumstances of Distress can deface the Beauty and Amiableness of that fair and engaging Character in which Goodness is the prevailing Quality : On the contrary, the Beauty of Virtue supports itself under a Cloud ; nay, shines with a peculiar Lustre amidst surrounding Calamities. There cannot be on Earth a more engaging Sight, than to behold a good Man, steadily keeping up to that Character amidst the greatest Distresses ; maintaining a noble Struggle with adverse Occurrences ; and holding on his well-chosen Course, amidst the hardest Trials ! How natural is it to be interested in such a Character ; and share in all his Sufferings ! Yet, tho' we could wish him more prosperous, we would not have him so at the Expence of foregoing one Title of his steady Virtue ; but would rather see him as he is, than in a more
easy

easy Condition with such a Loss to his Character. On the other Hand, is not successful Villany always beheld with Abhorrence and Indignation?

Suppose we neither receive nor expect, the least Benefit from the Exercise of the good Man's Virtue; still we behold it with Approbation: Such amiable Characters please, not only when seen in Life, and in our own Time; but even when barely represented to the Fancy; or read of, as having appeared long ago, and in remote Corners of the World. Nay, our having received the greatest Benefits, will not make the Character of him who bestows them appear amiable, unless as it gives us a View of Goodness in his Nature and Disposition, exciting him to this Beneficence; if otherwise, and we know that he bestows these Benefits from some sinister Principle, or out of mere Regard to Self-interest, we shall not esteem him, even while we *thank* him. Nor will our receiving the greatest Hurt, make the Character of him who produces it appear odious, unless the Mischief he does appears to us to proceed from Hatred, or some Passion contrary to Goodness. Nor would our being considerable Gainers by one's Wickedness and Knavery, hinder us from condemning the ill Character: 'Tis a common Saying in such Cases, that People *love the Treason, but hate the Traitor*; but the real Fact would be more exactly express'd by saying, That they *love the Fruits of the Treason, but hate the Treason itself*; seeing 'tis for no other Reason they hate the Traitor.

Goodness is always amiable, according to the Degree and Prevalency of it in any Character. 'Tis therefore in the highest Degree amiable, in its utmost Perfection: Nor can we imagine a greater Perfection of Beauty, and a more proper Object of the highest Delight, than "a Being, in whom perfect
" and unalterable Goodness is join'd with Almighty
" Power and unbounded Wisdom, Eternity, and
" Om-

“ Omnipresence ; who is the fair and unspotted
 “ Original and Pattern of Goodness ; and the Foun-
 “ tain of all Good.” So that *the highest Love of God* is
 the proper and natural Exercise of this Principle, the
Love of Goodness.

This Sense of the Beauty and amiableness of Good-
 ness must particularly prompt us to study what is
 thus fair and amiable *in ourselves* ; and avoid what is
 ugly and odious. This Sense of Beauty and Deformity
 in Life and Manners, as it has a particular Res-
 pect to our own Affections and Actions, is commonly
 called CONSCIENCE : For, at the same Time that
 we are conscious to ourselves of what passes in our
 Minds and what we do, and naturally have some Re-
 membrance of it, and Reflection upon it afterwards ;
 this Consciousness and Review naturally presents to
 us our Temper and Actions, under an agreeable or
 odious Appearance. This Sense of Beauty and De-
 formity in our own Affections and Actions, secretly
 admonishes us what to do, and what to avoid ; and
 therefore was by the noble Ancients considered as an
inward Monitor ; and represented as the governing
 Principle in our Frame : And 'tis with Respect to
 this inward Monitor, that the great Apostle of the
 Gentiles says, *Rom. ii. 14, 15. That, the Gentiles*
which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things con-
tained in the Law ; and these having not the Law, are
a Law unto themselves : Which shew the Work of
the Law written in their Hearts ; their Consciences also
bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while ac-
cusing, or else excusing one another. Thus has the
 wise and good Author of our Frame given us more
immediate Notices what to do and avoid ; than those
 that are got by Deductions of Reason, by Maxims
 and Rules form'd as the Result of a long Train of Ar-
 gument : And hence it is, that many Men's first
 Thoughts are their best, in these Matters ; those
Dictates of their Consciences, which prevent a delibe-
 rate

rate Enquiry, are oft-times more just than those Conclusions that are the Result of a Deliberation, on which Appetite or mistaken Interest have a great Influence. And Conscience not only dictates to us what to do or avoid; but prompts us to what is Good, and restrains us from what is Evil; and makes continual Efforts to govern and direct our Conduct: 'Tis a plain and obvious Indication of this Effort of Conscience; that it naturally interposes its Judgment, without our setting ourselves deliberately to consult it; nor will it suffer us to act contrary to its Dictates, without checking and reprov- ing us, and rendering us uneasy; till, by repeated and even violent Struggles with it, and a Custom of disregarding it, Men stifle and suppress those Checks; and, even thus, the most abandon'd are not able to silence it altogether.

From all this, 'tis evident, that we act contrary to our own Sense of Things, and render ourselves deform'd and odious to ourselves; when we act contrary to the Bent of universal Benevolence, or of Love and Resignation to the Deity. Let us now see,

III. How the Matter stands with Respect to our Interest, rightly understood; and whether *that* would not likewise lead us to the same Temper and Conduct which kind Affections prompt us to, and which our Minds approve as fair and amiable? Whether the most extensive Goodness, and Self-love conducted by just Views of our best Enjoyment, are not perfectly harmonious; and 'tis only the Report of deceitful Spies that can raise a Difference, or Dissension, betwixt them.

However forward many are to make their Estimate of Happiness from the visible Affluence of outward Means of the Gratification of Sense and Appetite; yet this Way of Reckoning is no less false, than 'tis commonly unfavourable to Virtue. Methinks a
very

a very easy Reflection on our own Frame, or even a slight Attention to our Experience, might suffice to convince us; that our Happiness depends far more on the Temper of our Minds, and what we *are* ourselves, than on our outward Possessions, and what we have; and our greatest and most steady Joys arise rather from our inward Affections, than from the greatest Abundance of outward Things: And pray, of what Worth to us, is the largest *Possession* of outward Things; but according to the inward *Enjoyment* they afford us? But the Foundation of any inward Enjoyment must be laid in the *Temper* of the Mind itself: A Mind ruffled and discomposed will mar our Pleasure of any Sort; and render us incapable of any Enjoyment, had we ever so great an Affluence of the outward Means of that Enjoyment.

It may, perhaps, on a superficial View of the Matter, be thought; that, as we are Creatures endowed with various Passions and Appetites, our greatest Enjoyment must ly in the gratifying of them all; or, if we cannot gratify them all at once, 'tis best to follow the Sway of any of them that chances to be uppermost, without giving ourselves the Trouble to bring them under any Government, but permitting their free and unconfin'd Course, without Controul; and they may be indifferently reckon'd happy, who please themselves in the Gratification of any of them; nor is there any Rule for distinguishing in this Case, seeing Men's *Tastes* of Enjoyment differ. But, the very obvious Observation, "That all our Appetites cannot be gratified at once; and that the indulging some, and to a certain Pitch, unavoidably interferes with the gratifying of others;" must lead us to be sensible of the Necessity of some Rule in this Case. For, let it be allowed that, as no natural Passion was form'd in vain, they are all to be gratify'd, as far as they can consistently: Yet, let *Tastes differ* as they will, I think
it

it will hardly be denied by any one; who reflects ever so little on his own Experience; that the gratifying of some Appetites and Affections affords him greater Satisfaction than gratifying others, which have perhaps been felt equally strong, but in complying with which he has found himself miserably disappointed of the enjoyment he promised himself. This very Observation must lead us to this Rule in gratifying our Appetites; that “ if we would have any settled and lasting Enjoyment, and have the greatest Satisfaction we can in Life, we must guard against indulging any one Appetite or Passion, so as to interfere with another which will afford us greater and more lasting Enjoyment.” To keep this due Ballance amongst our inward Affections, must be the only method for the Happiness of Life. Passion and Appetite are in themselves but blind Guides; and we shall be oft-times and grossly deceived, if we judge what is *best* for us, by the mere Strength of Desire, or Affection. Those natural Appetites which lead us after the Things that belong to our private Advantage, are no Doubt, good and useful, when conducted by just Views of what belongs to our Welfare; but if we permit them to swell to the utmost Pitch, and take their fullest Swing, without any Direction or Controul, they will frustrate their proper Purpose with Regard to our own Welfare; and will work into Passions perfectly unnatural; being such as conduce no more to our private Advantage, than to the Good of others; but the stronger they grow will the more effectually prove inward Sources of perpetual Disturbance and Distress to us; so that in the Issue this fancied *Liberty* will introduce the most wretched *Slavery*.

It would therefore be well for us, if, instead of imploying our chief Care about the Happiness of Life, in enquiring what outward Things are *best* for us (by the Rule of being *most suitable to our Appetites*) and eagerly pursuing after them; we be-

flowed more of our Pains in considering what Appetites and Affections were *best* for us to cherish in ourselves; and would heartily bend our Endeavours to improve these in our Minds, and be more constantly employed in exercising them.

If there are certain Affections which, in their own Nature and Exercise,

(1.) Afford the greatest *inward* Enjoyment;

(2.) Put us in special Circumstances of Advantage, for obtaining the most considerable *outward* Means of Satisfaction; and,

(3.) Preserve our Minds in that Disposition, which is requisite to give us a Relish of any Enjoyment:

If, on the other Hand, the impairing of this Temper, or the Prevalency of a contrary one, tends to give us inward Pain and Disturbance; and renders us incapable of Enjoyment, even amidst the greatest Affluence of the outward Means of it:

Then, it must always be *our true Interest*, to cherish and exercise that Disposition which is the inward Foundation of steady Enjoyment; and to check and cure every Branch of that Disposition which is the inward Source of Woe and Disturbance.

Let us then enquire,

(1.) What Affections they are, the Exercise of which affords the greatest *inward* Enjoyment? And may I not appeal to all who have ever felt in themselves any Thing of the Exercise of kind and social Affections, Love, Compassion, Generosity or Gratitude; whether the Exercise of them is not naturally accompanied with the greatest Delight? They afford an original Joy, which does not require any preceeding Pain to raise it, or give it a Relish. The Pleasure of those Passions which respect our private Advantage is, in a great Measure, confin'd to the *Gratification* of them; they give us Pain, when we cannot gratify them: But, even when Love and Compassion are unsuccessful, still we are pleased to feel them

them stirring and prevailing in our Hearts: And, even when these *kind Affections* lead us through a Series of Anxiety and Concern, Pity and Sympathy, there is a secret Pleasure attending those Disturbances; we hug and indulge them, and are unwilling to be deprived of them any Way, but by a Joy arising from the Success of those for whom we were concern'd, the Relief of those whom we pitied. Far more are these Affections delightful when successful; when we actually afford Help and Succour, bestow Benefits, and spread Happiness around us. The more large and extensive the Exercise of the kind Affections is; the greater is the Joy accompanying it. How great the Joy of a generous and extensive good Affection to the universal Well of the whole Rational World; especially if, from a Persuasion of the Care of an Universal Governour, who is perfectly Wise and Powerful, as well as Good, we are satisfied that this general Happiness is secured and taken Care of, amidst all Changes and Revolutions, and all *seeming or partial and temporary* Mixtures of *Evil* in the present imperfect and unfinished State of Things! What Joy must this naturally afford a good Man! What chearful *Resignation* must it inspire, as to every Thing that belongs to his own particular Interest for the present, which is swallowed up in the Universal Good, in which he is satisfied he shall find his own greatest Enjoyment! What Delight and Joy does the devout Mind feel, in contemplating and adoring the amiable Perfections of God; especially, when thus animated to form his own Mind, and Conduct more and more after the Model of that exalted Pattern of moral Excellence! How delightful to view His extensive Goodness; to contemplate the Wisdom of His Conduct; to consider one's self as a true Member and Subject of His Kingdom, and under the Care of that Almighty King! What Delight does the generous Heart feel, in sharing the Joys of others, and beholding

beholding them happy ; especially, when 'tis by his own Means, and when he receives a new and repeated Sense of Happiness from the symptoms of that Joy himself has produced ! Tho' we lessen our *Share* of outward Things by communicating them ; yet the *Enjoyment* is heighten'd by this Participation. Such are the Satisfactions that *immediately* accompany the Exercise of kind and pious Affections.

This Pleasure is exceedingly heighten'd by the Approbation of the conscious Mind, and by the fair and amiable Appearance of these good Affections. The Pleasure of kind Affections is not confin'd to the immediate Exercise ; as the Pleasures of Sense, for the most Part, are ; but remains in the Mind ; and returns every Time we review the amiable Affections, every Time we look back on the good Actions done. What Tranquillity and Enjoyment arises from Peace of Mind * ! Can we imagine a greater, and more steady Joy, than flows from a constant Series of easy and self-approving Reflections, in which Vanity and partial Fondness have no Share ; but that Temper and Conduct the Mind approves in one's self, would be equally approv'd where-ever beheld ! What further Satisfaction must it afford the Mind of a good Man, that, as a Conduct so beneficial and so amiable tends to procure a fair Reputation, and recommends to general Esteem ; he is conscious to himself of the deserv'd Esteem and Love of others ; he enjoys, not their feign'd Applauses or partial Commendations ; but their just Esteem, their hearty Love and Gratitude ! What a transcendent Delight to look upon himself as approv'd by the great and good Governour of the World, who *loves Goodness and Righteousness* ! The very Consciousness of acting under the View and Approbation of such a perfect Judge of Excellency, by whom *Actions* are justly weigh'd, what Joy must it afford !

Such

*Prov. iii. 17. Isa. xxxii. 17.

Such are the inward Enjoyments of a good and pious Mind. But, let us consider,

(2.) What Circumstances of Advantage these kind and pious Affections put us in, for obtaining the most considerable *outward* Means of Satisfaction. Religion and Virtue not only allow us, but oblige us, to use all Methods of Industry, for procuring outward Advantages, that are consistent with Piety and Goodness: And these honest Arts are found, in Experience, to be the surest Ways of thriving; when Violence and Oppression are soon disappointed of their Purpose, and no Arts of Fraud and Deceit can hold out long*. Piety and Goodness also afford a peculiar Security for the peaceable Acquisition and Possession of outward Things; as they tend to procure us the Good-will and Assistance of others about us, and to secure us from their Jealousy and Opposition†. Let us consider,

(3.) What a Relish kind and pious Affections tend to give us for *any* Enjoyment. A Mind free from inward Bitterness and Disgust, and from all uneasy and paining Reflections, is, in some Measure, necessary to our Satisfaction of any Sort, or from any Thing. Now 'tis the Exercise of kind Affections, that most effectually banishes all those fretful and galling Passions, which ruffle the Temper and disturb the Mind; and produces that inward Peace and Tranquillity, which is necessary to any true Enjoyment. Temperance and Sobriety, in governing our private Affections and Desires, do most directly, and naturally contribute to our bodily Health and Strength; and also to our inward Ease, and the Contentment of our Minds; without which, there can be no Enjoyment: Nor is this inward Quiet and Tranquillity to be obtained by the greatest Abundance of outward Things; the most affluent State being found

* Prov. x. 9. and xii. 19. † 1 Pet. iii. 13.

found the most exposed to the greatest Disturbances from every little cross Accident or Disappointment : It will be found in Experience, that the greatest Enjoyment, and most lively Relish of the Gratifications of Sense themselves, is to be obtained and preserved by such a moderate and temperate Use of them, as is consistent with Piety and Goodness, and does not interfere with the Enjoyments of a higher Kind already mention'd. And thus we have considered, what a natural Foundation of Happiness and Enjoyment, Piety and Goodness is. But,

On the other Hand: the Workings of such irregular Passions as are contrary to Piety and Goodness, together with the uneasy Reflections which attend them, make up the greatest Misery. The Workings of Anger, Envy, Resentment, Revenge, and the like unsocial Passions, raise most violent Tumults, and produce inward Torments in a Man's own Breast : They render the Mind ugly and deformed, so that it cannot bear the View of itself ; and when in their Height and Strength, they so possess the Soul, as to exclude every relieving Thought ; they toss a Man out of one State of inward Torment into another ; from the Torment of *Resentment*, till the Passion is gratified, to the Tortures of *Remorse*, quickly succeeding the unnatural Gratification. Other selfish Passions have a more flattering and agreeable Appearance : But as all the Pleasure of them depends upon the Gratification of them, how liable are we to be disappointed in that Pursuit ? And how great is the Anguish of that Disappointment oft-times felt ; especially if no Relief arises from Enjoyments of a better Kind ? And, so far as these Passions lead us aside from the Paths of Goodness, and carry us to any Thing hurtful to others ; it may be evident, from what has been already observed, that they deprive us of greater Enjoyments, than the Gratification of them will afford, and expose

pose us to greater Woes than can be compensated by it. Impiety and Neglect of God deprive us of all those Enjoyments and Comforts, which arise from a Regard to his Being and Providence; and which are found of the greatest Use to relieve the Mind, when it stands in special Need of Support. How uneasy and disturb'd must his Mind oft-times be, in such a mixed State of Things as the present, and under such Disasters as all Men are unavoidably expos'd to, who is regardless of the Hand of a wise and good Providence; or frets and murmurs under the Dispensations of it! And how can he miss to be often expos'd to Fretfulness and Murmuring under many outward Events; who, instead of seeking his Happiness in those *inward Enjoyments*, which no outward Changes can rob him of against his Will; has his Heart so bent on his own *outward Affairs*, that he is regardless of the Welfare of others, and the general Good!

Further: What inward Pain and Remorse must naturally accompany that Remembrance of his own Temper, and Reflection upon his Actions, which a wicked and impious Man cannot miss to have! Who can express the Anguish of his Mind, who cannot reflect on his Temper and Conduct, but he beholds in himself something horrid and shocking, who sees himself justly despised and hated by those about him! What Terrors must seize his Mind, who is fill'd with a just Sense of the Displeasure of Heaven! which a wicked Man may well be in Fear of, even from God's Love of Goodness, and of the Welfare of his Creation, tho' there was no express Denunciation of it. How disturb'd must be the Condition of his Soul, who is continually haunted by the Spectres of his Guilt; and oft-times fill'd with just Fears, both from Men and from the Deity, and even with imaginary ones! What Enjoyment can such a one have, even in the most flattering Circumstances of Fortune, and
amidst

amidst the greatest Abundance of outward Things! This is the *natural* Portion of a wicked and vicious Man.

It may perhaps be thought, that, however *in the Main*, a benevolent and pious Temper and Behaviour tends to our greatest Enjoyment; yet, *in some particular Cases*, it may be our Interest to act a contrary Part. It must be own'd, that one may gain some particular outward Advantages, by forsaking the Ways of Piety and Goodness; and may sustain some outward Losses, by adhering to them: And yet this is far from being so often the Case; as one under the Government of Fancy and Appetite may, from *their* Suggestions, be induced to think. But these *outward Advantages*, obtain'd by any vicious Action, are always attended with an *inward Loss*, which is not to be compensated by them; as *outward Losses* attending the Exercise of Piety and Goodness, are accompany'd with *inward Advantage and Improvement*. Every Deviation from the Paths of Goodness breaks in upon that Tone and Turn of the Temper, which is the inward Foundation of Tranquillity and Happiness; and introduces such a Disorder and Corruption into the Mind, as we know not where it may stop: Every partial Disorder within tends to an universal one, and is a Part of it; and is naturally accompany'd with Part of the Mischief flowing from it, tho' it may not be so plainly felt at the first: Every known and wilful Departure from the Paths of Uprightness must make Way for inward Reproach and Remorse: Nor can any one know what Length the Mischief may go he does himself, when he ventures to break that Peace of Mind, which he knows not when, or if ever, he shall wholly recover: And he who ventures all this Loss for any outward Gains, makes but a sad Bargain: Even in this Sense, there is a great Deal of Force in that warm and home Question of our Saviour; *What*

*What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul *?* 'Tis a vain Imagination to think, that if we adhere to Goodness and Honesty, in most Instances, we may safely adventure to deviate from it *in some*: This is to make Life a perpetual Inconsistency. What settled Peace can there be within; what regular Tranquillity; what steady Enjoyment in Life; when one's Heart is divided, and he is at perpetual Variance with himself; condemning at one Time what he approves at another? The only Way to settled Peace and undisturbed Enjoyment, is by steady Uprightness; by *one* fixed and considerate Resolution; which, once well formed, must be steadily kept to, and all the Passions and Appetites brought under Subjection to it.

I thought it needful to be at the more Pains to state this Matter fully and clearly; because lessening the *present and natural* Advantages of Piety and Goodness, and magnifying its present Distresses, is not only a Thing industriously laboured at by the Enemies to the Cause of Virtue and Goodness; but they are even seconded in this Attempt, unwarily I hope, by some who have thought, it seems, to serve the Cause of Religion and Revelation, by representing the present Condition of Virtue as most melancholy and calamitous; and with this preposterous View have joined in the Cry of *calling the proud happy*; and setting forth the State of prosperous Vice as a Condition to be envied, "were it not for the Awe of " *a hard Master*, who, it seems, grudges us this Happiness!" But, what is there that should lead us to such unfavourable Views of the *present Portion* of Piety and Goodness? Is it the Share good Men have in the common Calamities of human Life? But sure these do not more befall good Men than bad Men: The most that can be said of them is, that they fall *promiscuously* on the good and bad: A Circumstance

D

which

which may hinder the *Difference* betwixt them from being so *conspicuous* to all the World, but that the Consideration of the Wisdom and Goodness of the Universal Governour may afford us Ground to expect it shall one Day be more so; and this may render a Revelation, which assures us it shall be so, on that Account, highly credible. Yet sure this can never make the present Condition of a good Man, in any Respect, worse than that of a bad Man, seeing common Calamities fall equally upon both; and cannot, certainly, ly so heavy on the good Man as on the other, but must sit easier and lighter upon him, so far as he is in the Exercise of his Piety and Goodness. Is it, then, the peculiar Hardships and Sufferings good Men endure, on Account of their Goodness, or for adhering to a Cause which their Virtue obliges them to maintain, that makes us think so unfavourably of their present Condition? But, have they not their peculiar Supports too? There is a *Strength and Force*, as well as Beauty, belonging to Piety and Goodness, so far as they prevail in the Temper and Conduct, whence the Name of *Virtue* is deriv'd to them: The Joys they afford tend to strengthen the Temper, and give a Force to the Mind, to bear up under Oppositions and Hardships: There is a Firmness and Steadiness, that is of their very Nature; and a great Deal of their proper Exercise lies in forbearing Pleasures, and enduring Pains, in the Maintenance of a steady Resolution in preserving that Temper, and keeping up to that Conduct in which the Soul finds its greatest Enjoyment. 'Tis not, certainly, any Loss or Hardship that may be sustained in such a noble Course, that can ly heavy upon *his* Mind, who considers these as befalling him not without the sovereign Disposal of a perfectly wise and good Master, who sees meet so to exercise him; who regards them as the appointed Trial of his Virtue, by which it is to be exercised,

exercised, brightned, and improv'd; who considers the Losses he bravely sustains, and the Sufferings which with a steady Mind he endures, as the Price at which he purchases Strength and Freedom of Mind, and the Mastery of himself; greater Firmness and Constancy in a good Cause; and consequently an Enjoyment of inward Peace, and Satisfaction yet more uninterrupted, and more above the Reach of Disturbance! But, suppose the Sufferings of a good Man come to the greatest Extremity, and he endures the sharpest Persecutions; Why, this is far from being so often the Case, as may be imagin'd: For ordinary, a Man's Piety and Goodness itself affords him a peculiar Security against the Ill-will or the ill Designs of others: 'Tis commonly from Lust of worldly Power or Wealth that the Violence of Persecutors arises; and 'tis, at least, an imagin'd Opposition of worldly Interests that makes the good Man fall under it; while his being on the Side to which his Virtue obliges him to adhere, (but which his Persecutors, perhaps, call Heresy) is but the pretended Cause of their persecuting him; and were this Pretence wanting, others might be found to patronize that Cruelty and Oppression, which, in Reality, has its Rise from other Causes. And, in the Case of such Sufferings, even setting aside future Rewards, a good Man may have the Prospect of a great Deal of Good to be done by his firmly enduring them; to which with Pleasure he sacrifices private Advantages; and even, perhaps, a *Life*, which, prolong'd with the abandoning so glorious a Cause, must be to him a wretched and miserable one. And, if 'tis most delightful to behold a good Man maintaining a noble Struggle with Adversity, and holding on his well-chosen Course amidst the worst Shocks of Calamity; what a vast Joy must it be, for a Man's own Mind to applaud him, as the good and steady Man, firm and unmov'd in the best of Causes!

Causes! If *peradventure* for one good Man some would even dare to die*; must not a truly good Man die, with Pleasure, for the Good of Mankind, or of his Country; or for the Advantage of that Cause, which he looks upon as the Cause of God, and of the Happiness of Mankind? And, all the while, in the unequal Comparison that is made betwixt the present Condition of a good and bad Man, there seems to be very little Account made of the *peculiar Calamities* which attend *the vicious*; and that commonly in the most prosperous outward Circumstances; Calamities far greater, as they immediately affect the Mind and Soul; and which more *constantly* attend the vicious, as arising from the inward Temper itself; than any outward Calamities which *sometimes* befall the good and virtuous. Did we fairly take the *inward* Condition, as well as *outward* Circumstances, both of the good and bad into the Account, we might see abundant Ground to conclude; not only that, supposing both on an equal Footing as to outward Things, there could be no Question which had the greatest Enjoyment: But also that, supposing the bad Man had commonly the Advantage in outward Respects, yet the inward Enjoyments of a good Man will compensate his outward Losses and Afflictions; whereas the greatest Affluence of outward Things will not compensate the Want of inward Peace: And, however dazzling an Appearance the Splendour of Greatness, Elevations of Fortune, and the Blandishments of Sense, may make to those who look only on the Outside of Things; they can afford but very slender Enjoyment to one void of Peace within, disturbed by the Workings of irregular Passions, and the Remorses of a guilty Mind.

So that Piety and Virtue is, in its own Nature, always, the Good, and Vice the Ill, of every Man; that Temper and Conduct, which is *best* for others about us, is also best for *ourselves*: And so far as we
are

* Rom. v. 7.

are wanting to promote the Good of our Neighbours, and of Mankind ; we are so far wanting to ourselves, and cease to promote our own Good and Happiness.

From all which the general Conclusion follows, with the greatest Clearness and Evidence : “ That
 “ there is a manifest Difference betwixt one Kind of
 “ Disposition and Conduct of Men, and another ; according to which the one is Good, the other Evil ;
 “ even tho’ no Law did enjoin the one, or forbid the
 “ other : And this Difference is as certain and un-
 “ changeable, as that betwixt Light and Darkness,
 “ a bitter and sweet Taste ; the one no more arises
 “ from, or is alterable by, the meer Will and Plea-
 “ sure of any, than the other.”

From what has been discours’d on this Argument it may appear : That, it is doing most useful Service to the Publick, and to particular Persons, and even Transgressors themselves ; for every one, in his proper Station, and, as he has Opportunity, to use the best Methods in his Power for putting a Stop to the Torrent of Vice, and promoting a *Reformation of Manners* : And that they who join together in Societies for this Purpose, that they may the better be assisting to one another in it, are engaged in a good Cause.

What Pity is it, if so good a Design is ever exposed to Reproach, by a wrong or indiscreet Management of it ? This, therefore, I hope You, who are engag’d in Reforming Societies, will carefully guard against, in all Instances.

There is one Caution, particularly ; which seems to me of such Importance, that I hope you’ll forgive me if I cannot but put you in Mind of it ; namely, That tho’ there are other Methods proper to be used for reclaiming our Neighbours from any Thing that is amiss in them, as Instruction, Persuasion, and the Influence of a good Example ; yet the Method of punishing Offenders, is to be confined to such Crimes of the vicious as are hurtful to others about them, or
 disturb.

disturb the Peace of human Society. And therefore, you are carefully to beware, that, under Pretence of punishing Crimes, you do not unjustly restrain Men from the free Exercise of their natural and unalienable Right of enquiring for themselves in Affairs of Religion; and acting agreeably to the Light of their own Minds; so far as it does not lead them to commit any Matter of wrong or wicked Leudness, by which their Neighbours are injured, or their natural or civil Rights invaded. It would certainly be a most awkward and inconsistent Thing; if they who set themselves to bear down and suppress Vice; should, under that Colour, set themselves to suppress by Methods of Violence the Exercise of a Right, without the Exercise of which in some Measure there could be no Virtue; the Right of Conscience, and private Judgment in Matters of Religion: How absurd and inconsistent would it be, if the Members of Societies for *Reformation of Manners* should themselves, and pretending to act in that Character too, be guilty of the greatest Iniquity and Injustice? Should become *Persecutors and injurious*? or permit themselves to be made the Instruments or Patrons of any Motion or Attempt to deprive their Fellow-Subjects of any of their valuable Liberties and Privileges; or infringe any of those natural or civil Rights, in the Possession and Exercise of which 'tis the proper Office of the Civil Magistrate to protect and defend all Good Subjects?

Among many Evils, and Characters of Degeneracy, to be *lamented* in the present Age; there is one very great Blessing, which all good Men have Ground to *rejoice in*: That the Principles of Liberty, the Rights of Conscience and private Judgment, are better understood, and more regarded, than (for any Thing I know) they have ever been in former Times; and I believe I may adventure to say no less, if not more, in *Great Britain*, than in any other Country under the Sun. While this Happiness

con-

continues among us, as I hope it will continue, spread, and grow; especially while we are under the Protection of a Government which, in the making of Laws and the Administration of Justice, acts with such a sacred Regard to *these Rights*; we may hope that valuable Improvements, in all useful Knowledge, shall take Place; while the great Barrs against a free and impartial Enquiry, arising from a Regard to worldly Interest and the Fear of Man's Judgment, are remov'd: And when Truth in Religion and Morality obtains a fair Trial, Reason and Argument free Scope, we may expect that Impostures of all Kinds shall be more and more detected; the Kingdom of Darkness, which has been chiefly supported by Methods of Violence, and the Interposal of the secular Arm in Affairs of Conscience, shall be more and more weaken'd; false Reasoning, and ill-plac'd Raillery and Buffoonry, will not long stand the Test, but one Time or other expose themselves; and the Folly and Absurdity of those shall more and more appear, *who call Evil good, and Good evil, &c.*

Only it concerns us to take great Care that we *use not our Liberty for a Cloak of Licentiousness**: That we don't make Use of that Liberty we have, and ought to have, of acting agreeably to the Dictates of our Consciences, *without Fear of Man's Judgment*; as a Pretence to cover Over-acting contrary to the Dictates of our Consciences, *without Fear of the righteous Judgment of God*. If such Licentiousness ever hurries Men on to the committing Matter of wrong or wicked Leudness against others; the governing Powers in civil Society, who are Guardians of the Publick Peace, have a Right, and 'tis their Duty, to restrain it by proper Animadversions and Punishments suited to the Nature of the Offence.

But there are other Methods, as I have already observ'd, proper to be used by all, as they have

Op-

* 1 Pet. ii. 16.

Opportunity for reclaiming their Neighbours from whatever is wrong in their Temper or Behaviour : the Methods of Instruction and Perswasion ; and the Influence of a good and engaging Example. In all these it particularly becomes the Members of re-forming Societies to show themselves *Patterns of good Works* * : and 'tis the Business of every good Man to second their laudable Endeavours. Particularly, as the most effectual Way of introducing and promoting a general Reformation, is for every Man to reform one ; and a good Example is, by the Blessing of God, of great Influence for gaining and reclaiming Offenders ; every one may contribute some Part towards a general Reformation of Manners, by amending whatever is amiss in himself, and showing forth in an exemplary Behaviour the Beauty and Amiableness of Holiness and Goodness : And it especially becomes the Disciples of JESUS, to *depart from Iniquity* † ; and to *let their Light so shine before Men, that they may see their good Works, and glorify their Father who is in Heaven* *.

It would also contribute very much to the promoting a general Reformation of Manners ; if Masters of Families would take such Care, as their Place enables and obliges them to do, of the Manners of their Domesticks ; particularly, by a more careful and diligent Practice of that important, but much neglected, Duty of Family-Instruction : And if Parents, and others to whom the Education of young ones is committed, would lay out their main Care in forming their Minds ; this is the Foundation on which an effectual Reformation of Manners must be built. There is nothing, indeed, has a more dismal Aspect upon the rising Age ; than the general Dissoluteness of the Youth : thus, (together with a certain Vanity of distinguishing themselves some Way, when a Regard to a valuable Reputation is gone) prompts them to swallow and espouse the most loose

and

* Tit. ii. 7. † 2, Tim. ii. 19 * Mat. ix. 16

and dissolute Principles; and lays them open to the Snares laid for them by any designing Seducer, who will favour them with a shallow Argument, a merry Story, or a sordid Jest; which they may have in Readiness to oppose to any sober Admonition or grave Argument laid before them by others, or any remaining Checks of their own Consciences.

I cannot help ascribing this general Corruption of Youth, in a great Measure, to the gross and general Neglect of a rational and virtuous Education. How many, alas! take more Care of the training of their Dogs and Horses, than of their Children and Heirs? And, even among those who are not altogether careless and negligent of the Education of their Children, how much of that Concern which should be laid out in forming their Minds, is altogether spent in teaching them Things that are of no Use to them in the Way of Life for which they are designed; or, at best, training them up in Accomplishments which are trifling and inconsiderable, in Comparison of a good and virtuous Mind? And I speak it with very great Concern; I cannot help being apprehensive that the Looseness and Debauchery so much lamented in many, who are observed to have had the Benefit of a Religious Education, may often be found to proceed, in a great Measure, from that very Education itself, as 'tis managed: For I may appeal to attentive Observers, whether that which obtains the Name of a Religious Education, does not often turn out in such a Shape as this? The Care of Parents, or Instructors, about the religious Part of Education, is almost wholly spent in inculcating upon young Ones the *Shibboleth* of a Party; making them acquainted with, and instilling into them a Regard for the particular Doctrines or peculiar Forms of their own Sect; in which there may oft-times be found a Mixture of Things absurd or trifling; which yet are inculcated with as great Earnestness, and by the same Methods, with the most weighty and important Points;

E

while

while great Pains are taken to inspire in them, at the same Time, a strong Aversion to those of another Way of Thinking, and that by Methods which even a childish Capacity may discern to be contrary to Equity and Charity: And instead of forming their Minds to a rational Sense of Good and Evil, a Taste and Relish for true Piety and Virtue, upon such Principles as will stand the Test of a most strict Examination; any Instances of good Practice they are taught, are recommended and enforced by meer Authority; or by the Awe of future Rewards and Punishments; which, as they are made Use of without ever explaining the Nature and Justice of them, can contribute no more to promote a liberal Piety and Virtue, a Relish for true Goodness, and Savour of Honesty in the Mind, than Whips and Sugar-plumbs: While, in all the Offices of Religion to which they are accustomed they are *detained before the Lord** against their Will; forced to run the Round of certain Forms, they know no Good in; no Care being taken to instill into them a just Sense and Liking of true Piety and Devotion, or a Regard to any valuable Purpose in such Observances, save only the pleasing of their Parents; whose Devotion and Piety, at the same Time, they observe to be exerted in such a Way as tends to give them no amiable and inviting, but rather a disgusting and forbidding View of it: And all the while, their kind and generous Affections are rather check'd, than forwarded and improv'd; while every selfish Passion and Appetite, instead of being regularly check'd and corrected, is rather in many Cases humour'd and encouraged; only the Exercise of them in some particular Instances is restrained, not by any rational Endeavours to cure the wrong Turn in the Temper, but by positive Precepts as to such and such particular Instances; and by an Awe and Constraint, which the young One knows he shall one Time get rid of, and longs to be delivered from.

Is

Is this to *train up a Child in the Way that he should go*? What must be expected to be the Consequence, when a young Thing, with the small Portion of common Sense such a Tutoring has left him, and with warm Blood and strong Passions, gets out into an en-
snaring World? When a Creature thus (neglected, shall I say, or rather) with great Care misguided, comes to be emancipated from such Fetters, and get rid of such awkward Restraints? When the raw un-
formed Youth comes once (as, perhaps with a scanty Portion of Understanding, and very slender Ex-
ercise of Reason he may) to discover a Flaw or Weak-
ness in some Things that, it may be, he has been taught to look upon as equally sacred with God and
Virtue, Goodness and Honesty; must it not be na-
tural for him, upon such a Discovery, with the Con-
currence of wild Passions used to no regular Govern-
ment, to draw very general and hasty Conclusions;
to throw up at once every Thing he has been former-
ly taught, and which, his Education has furnished
him with nothing to say for, more than for some
Things he has now found to be trifling and absurd?
to abandon a Course, which, both by Instruction and
Example, he has been taught to be troublesome and
painful; and betake himself to a Way of Life, which
his Appetites tell him is most delightful, but from
which hitherto he has been rigorously restrained?

I'm afraid we may despair of seeing any general
Reformation among the Youth, till such gross Faults
in their Education be amended; and till the first and
chief Care in training up of young Ones be employed
in forming their Minds right. Great Pains must be
taken to instill into them, according as their Capa-
cities gradually open, some Understanding of the
Nature of true Goodness and Virtue; good Thoughts
of God, and of the Obligations we are under to him;
just Notions of the Nature of *pure and undefiled Reli-
gion*, as 'tis founded on a Sense of the unalterable Dif-
ference betwixt moral Good and Evil; and the Belief
of

of a perfectly good God; together with some just Understanding of the natural Tendency and Influence of true Piety and Virtue prevailing in the Heart, to the present Improvement, Pleasure and Satisfaction of the Mind, and to the settled Peace and Tranquillity of the whole Life. And with this Care to inform their Judgments, must be joined the most careful and engaging Endeavours, to form their Minds to a Taste and Relish of true Goodness, Virtue and Piety: not only by describing to them, as clearly and fully as their Capacities will allow, some of the inward Enjoyments arising from them; but also by putting them upon reflecting on any Experience or Feeling of that Kind they themselves may have had, and leading them gently and by winning Methods to make Trial in some Instances; and thus gradually training them to some Experience of this Sort: But above all, by the Influence of a good Example, affording them an easy familiar and engaging View of the Beauty of Holiness, and Goodness; such an Example of exact Conformity to the several Rules of *pure and undefiled Religion*, as may set true Piety, and the several Virtues to which it animates, before their Eyes in its native Amiability; and show them that it is a most kind and benign, a most happy and comfortable Thing. In all which, great Care must be taken to suit the Manner of Instruction and Persuasion to the gradual opening of their Capacities, to their Tempers and the several Inclinations they early discover; heedfully catching at all Advantages afforded by the natural Kindness and Tenderneſs of their Tempers, and any little Sparks of Goodness, and a Sense of what is fair and beautiful in Manners, they show of their own Accord.

Perhaps I have enlarged upon this Subject, beyond the Proportion which falls to its Share in such a Discourse as this: But, methinks, not beyond its Importance, to a General Reformation of Manners.

F I N I S.